

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE****EFFICIENT PROCESS FOR HANDOVER BETWEEN SUBNET MANAGERS**

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A method and system for efficiently merging subnets having individual subnet managers into a single network with one master subnet manager is disclosed. During discovery and configuration of a subnet, a subnet manager creates a Subnet Management Database (SMDB) representative of the subnet components being managed. Each subnet manager contains an independent SMDB. When two or more subnets are merged (i.e., linked/connected together) to form a single network, a single one of the subnet managers is selected as the master subnet manager and all the subnets SMDBs must be merged. The other subnet managers are relegated to standby status. In a preferred embodiment, a SMDB record labeling mechanism is utilized to differentiate among components from the different subnets that may have the same parameter values, such as protection keys (P\_keys).

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In one embodiment of the invention, when there are two or more separate SMDBs, each maintained by separate master subnet managers on a separate subnet, means are provided for efficient merging of the SMDBs, such that the separate subnets become a single subnet, with a single master subnet manager and with a single SMDB.